

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
ABSTRACT**

M.W Department - Guidelines for providing Financial Assistance to Christian Pilgrimage to Holy Land of Jerusalem and other Biblical Places – Orders – Issued.

MINORITIES WELFARE (SDM) DEPARTMENT

G.O.Ms.No.99

Dated:19th October, 2013

Read the following:-

1. G.O.Ms.No. 29, M.W. (ICM) Dept., dt. 21.7.2008.
2. G.O.Ms.No. 36, M.W. (ICM) Dept., dt. 01.9.2008.
3. G.O.Ms.No. 39, M.W. (ICM) Dept., dt. 04.10.2008.
4. G.O.Ms.No. 10, M.W. (ICM) Dept., dt. 25.6.2009.
5. G.O.Ms.No. 11, M.W. (ICM) Dept., dt. 30.6.2009.
6. From the M.D, APSC(M)FC, Hyd., Lr. No. 01/APSCMFC/AO/Estb./2013, Dt. 18.7.2013.

ORDER:

In the letter 6th read above, the Managing Director, A.P. State Christian (Minorities) Finance Corporation, Hyderabad has furnished the Guidelines for providing Financial Assistance to Christian Pilgrimage to Holy Land of Jerusalem and other Biblical Places.

2. Government after careful examination hereby approve the following Guidelines for providing Financial Assistance to Christian Pilgrimage to Holy Land of Jerusalem and other Biblical Places:

Guidelines for providing Financial Assistance to Christian Pilgrimage to Holy Land of Jerusalem and other Biblical Places

1. INTRODUCTION

Places to be covered on Christian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Israel

This Pilgrimage covers a very large number of places connected with the life of Jesus Christ in Israel and other places in Jordan and Egypt connected with Christian faith and tradition. Mainly they are:

- a. Place of birth – BETHLEHEM
- b. Place of Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection – JERUSALEM
- c. Place of bringing up – NAZARETH
- d. Place of Baptism – JORDAN RIVER
- e. Places of preaching – around DEAD SEA and SEA OF GALILEE.
- f. Several other places connected with Christian faith and tradition.

(Contd....2)

The list of places proposed to be covered are given in the ***Annexure II.***

Pilgrimage to Holy Land is very sacred to all Christians and is a trip for spiritual rejuvenation. The Pilgrimage covers several places of Worship, Tradition and Christian Rituals. At almost all the above places, churches are built and during visits, the pilgrims have opportunity to pray and worship besides two most important aspects of pilgrimage, i.e. Baptism and Eucharistic Celebration.

Groups of about 50-100 pilgrims are to be led by the tour operator who is selected by the Tender Committee appointed by Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Ordinarily, the tour period is for a week (Israel Government issues visas only for 7 days). It is proposed to evaluate the standard tour packages being offered by tour operators now namely Israel – Egypt Jordan tour package and adopt the most economical package. The number of places to be covered in seven days tour package shall be decided by the screening Committee and accordingly tender notification shall be issued by the Managing Director, A.P. State Christian (Minorities) Finance Corporation, Hyderabad.

2. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF PILGIRMS

1. The following criteria for selection of the Pilgrims is proposed:
 - a. The Pilgrims should produce be Christian Community Certificate issued by the MRO or the Baptism Certificate issued by specified Churches listed by Government of Andhra Pradesh from time to time.
 - b. The tour will be from Hyderabad and back to Hyderabad.
 - c. Each group will have a minimum of 50 and maximum of 100 pilgrims.
 - d. Rs. 20,000/- (Rupees Twenty Thousands only) will be granted to each pilgrim by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Any expenditure over and above shall be borne by the pilgrims themselves.
 - e. Assistance from the Government of Andhra Pradesh shall be extended to needy. With liberty to the screening committee appointed by the Government to follow the order of preferences to the best possible advantage of he pilgrims.
 - i. Selection shall be **on frist-come-first served-basis** with preference to White Card Holders.
 - ii. Preference will be given to the aged Pilgrims who are physically fit.

(Contd....3)

- iii. Preference will be given to Fifth (5th) Timers who have not availed the facility earlier (proof of previous applications should be submitted).
- iv) Preference shall be given to couples – wife and husband for pilgrimage, so that they support each other throughout the Pilgrimage.
- f. The applicants should be in possession of valid passport with a minimum validity period of 2 years at the time of applying.
- g. Applicants are required to apply through a prescribed web based application form.
- h. **Ban on Repeaters:** Those who have performed Holy Land tour earlier through Government of Andhra Pradesh. It is to further clarify that a person who performed Holy Land tour in the earlier years through Government of Andhra Pradesh is not eligible to apply for Holy Land tour for the subsequent years.
- i. Pilgrims shall be selected on the basis of District Population on the ratio of applications received from the Districts as the Screening Committee considers to be appropriate.
- j. The Committee however reserves its discretion to go for a selection of Pilgrims by adopting lottery system when the demand is found to huge.
- k. Any person who is found to have furnished false information and concealed the fact of having performed Holy Land tour earlier shall not be allowed to proceed for Holy Land tour to Jerusalem and if found he/she will also off-loaded even at the Embarkation Point and the **entire amount deposited** by him/her shall be forfeited. The Pilgrimage to Holy Land of Jerusalem of such applicants can be cancelled upon detection at any stage of Application processing and movement, besides, he / she shall be prosecuted for making such incorrect / false declaration.
- l. Any legal disputes shall be subject to the jurisdiction of Hyderabad Court only.

3. THE FOLLOWING PERSONS ARE NOT TO BE COVERED UNDER THE SCHEME.

- a) Those suffering from Polio, Tuberculosis, Congestive Cardiac & Respiratory Ailment, Acute Coronary Insufficiency, Coronary Thrombosis, Mental Disorder of Handicapped.
- b) Ladies in the advanced stage of Pregnancy.
- c) Persons who are crippled, Handicapped, Lunatic or otherwise Physically incapacitated or suffering from Amputation of Legs.
- d) Those who do not have the Mental and Physical Health to perform the Pilgrimage.

(PTO)

- e) Those suffering from any disease communicable or otherwise or disability or mental disorder whatsoever, which might impede or jeopardize Holy Land tour to Jerusalem.
- f) Those persons against whom any Court Order prohibiting travel abroad exists.

4. IMPORTANT NOTE:

Submission of original passport along with form does not guarantee provisional selection to any of the above Pilgrims.

5. HOW TO APPLY:

The Government will advertise in the News Papers inviting applications centrally fixing **time limit**.

Applicants should apply online by visiting the website **www.christianminorites.ap.gov.in**. Once the application is submitted online the Computer System will issue a provisional registered number.

After applying online a Hard-Copy of the application along with a copy of passport should be sent through Speed Post or by hand delivery as the case may be so as to reach the O/o the Managing Director, A.P. State Christian (Minorities) Finance Corporation on or before the date specified in the advertisement, beyond the time limit fixed for applying online.

After receipt of Hard-Copy and if all the documents are found to be in order final Confirmation of the provisional registration number will be communicated, the applicant concerned to the mentioned address in the application for communication.

6. SCREENING COMMITTEE:

1. A Screening Committee may be constituted by the Government of Andhra Pradesh
 - A) An Officer (not below the rank of Deputy. Secretary), nominated by Principal Secretary / Secretary, Tourism Department.
 - B) An Officer (not below the rank of Deputy Secretary), nominated by Principal Secretary Finance and Planning Department.
 - C) Deputy/Joint/Additional Secretary, Minorities Welfare Department.
 - D) Managing Director, A.P. State Christian (Minorities) Finance Corporation – Convener.
 - E) A retired Christian All India Service Officer from Andhra Pradesh to be nominate by the Government.

Contd...(5)

The tenure of the Screening Committee constituted, is for a period of two years from the date of issue of the orders. Fresh Committee will be constituted for every two years. The Committee so appointed is empowered to evaluate the applications and submit the same with its recommendations to the Accepting Authority i.e. the Secretary to the Government, Minorities Welfare Department for final approval.

The Screening Committee should follow the guidelines given below and ensure transparency.

- a. The Screening Committee shall select the Pilgrims who produces community certificate issued by MRO or in the second preference the Baptism Certificate by specified Church authorities as the case may be.
- b. The Pilgrim shall posses valid passport.
- c. The decision made by the Screening Committee constituted by Government of Andhra Pradesh will stand final.
- d. The Pilgrims covered under item (3) are not entitle for consideration.

7. **SELECTION OF TOUR OPERATOR:**

1. The Managing Director, A.P. State Christian (Minorities) Finance Corporation shall call for tenders through advertisement from the Travel Agents having their offices or their branch offices at Hyderabad (since the originating and destination point for Pilgrimage will be Hyderabad) for conduct of Christians Pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Israel and other connected places.
2. A Tender Committee will be constituted with the following officers which will evaluate the tender process:
 - a) An officer (not below the rank of Deputy Secretary), nominated by Principal Secretary/Secretary, Tourism Department.
 - b) An officer (not below the rank of Deputy Secretary), nominated by Principal Finance Secretary.
 - c) Joint/Additional Secretary, Minorities Welfare Department.
 - d) Managing Director, A.P. State Christian (Minorities) Finance Corporation.
 - e) A retired Christian All India Service Officer from Andhra Pradesh to be nominated by Government.
 - f) An officer in the category of JCO or above category from Indian Airlines.

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The presence of any four members from out of the six Tender Committee Members shall be construed quorum from out of the Committee formed with six members above.

The tenure of the Committee constituted above is for a period of two years from the date of issue of the orders. Fresh Tender Committee will be constituted for every two years. The Committee evaluates the tenders and submit with their recommendations to the Accepting Authority i.e., the Secretary to Government in Minorities Welfare Department, who will finalize the tenders.

- 7) a) In the first instance " **Expression of Interest**" from the interested Travel Agencies stationed or having branch office at Hyderabad having the stipulated experience and satisfying all the conditions, stipulated hereafter in this order and also in the tender schedule will be invited by advertising in leading new papers with two weeks notice for interested agencies to submit their proposals.
- b) The Travel Agencies which are fulfilling all the conditions be " short listed" by the Tender Committee, if necessary by enquiring their credentials by visiting/inspecting their offices and records. Only the shortlisted Agencies will be issued Tender Schedules to quote their Financial Bids. Department shall complete this process in 10 working days time.
- c) The Bid Document (Tender Schedule both for ' Expression of Interest' and ' Financial Bids')prepared by the MD, APSC(M)FC shall first be approved by the tender Committee. Tender Schedules will be made available from the date of tender notice itself.
- d) After issue of tender schedules, the Agencies are given a notice of **one week** time, to submit their Financial Bids.
- e) At the time of opening of tenders all the short listed tenderers or their authorised representatives shall be invited to be present.
- f) The Bids will be evaluated by the Tender Committee with reference to their Financial Bids. The Managing Director of the A.P. State Christian (Minorities) Finance Corporation will process the evaluation report approved by the Tender Committee to the '**Accepting Authority**' (i.e) Government for final approval.

8. **CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF BIDS:**

1. The Tour Operator must be a registered Travel Agency conducting international tours, having the registered or branch office at Hyderabad.
2. Travel Agency should be a valid member of IATA. If it is a member of other International Bodies and having approval from Government of India Tourism Department, it shall be treated an added advantage.

(Contd....7)

3. The Travel Agency must have a five years Trade-standing of running a Travel Agency in Hyderabad.
4. It should have a minimum of three years experience in conducting Tours of Pilgrimage to Holy Land of Israel.
5. The Travel Agency should produce proof of Incorporation and also experience in conducting Tours of Pilgrimage to Holy Land of Israel and other connected places..
6. The Agency should be conversant with Christian practices namely Baptism (a large number of pilgrims take Baptism in River Jordan) Eucharistic Celebrations, Mass, Nativity, Via DOLOROSA, Holy SEPULACHER etc., - since this is expressly a Religious Trip.
7. Apart from verification of all papers submitted by the Agencies, a discussion/interview may be conducted by the Tender Committee to check about the authenticity and reliability of the Tour Operator. If necessary, the Committee may enquire about their credentials by visiting/inspecting their offices and records.
8. The Travel Agency must submit a detailed tour itinerary and the scheduled programme for the whole period of two years with details of total cost of tour indicating all facilities proposed.
9. The Tenders finalized are valid for two years period and the Tour Operator selected shall operate the tours for two years with the same conditions and at the rates quoted. No change of conditions or escalation of rates will be allowed after the finalization of the bids.
10. On approval of the tenders by the Secretary to the Government in Minorities Welfare Department, a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed between the Government and the Tour Operator.
11. Income Tax Returns of the proceeding last three years need be submitted by the tour operators along with the Certified Balance Sheet and Audit Report certified by the Chartered Accountant for the relevant period.

9. **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRAVEL AGENCY (TOUR OPERATOR):**

It is the responsibility of the Travel Agency approved by the Government to ensure safety of the Pilgrims and a comfortable and hassle-free tour from the start to finish.

- a. He is responsible for processing and obtaining Visas for Pilgrims from the embassy concerned.

(PTO)

- b. The Operator should make all arrangements to gather the Pilgrims in Hyderabad at one place on the day of travel, take responsibility for safety of travel to the land of Pilgrimage and bring them back to Hyderabad.
- c. He is responsible to organize a comfortable stay in Israel and other places – in any case not less than a room/suite as the case may be with double occupancy in a standard three star hotel and above.
- d. The Tour Operator should ensure that breakfast, lunch and dinner including at least five liter of packaged drinking water be provided to the Pilgrims.
- e. He is responsible to arrange transportation along with Guide to take the Pilgrims to places as per itinerary should be ensured.
- f. Providing the entry passes and tips for various services will be the responsibility of the Tour Operator and shall be borne by the Tour Operator only.
- g. In case any Pilgrim requires medical assistance, the same shall be ensured by the Tour Operator.
- h. The Tour Operator should provide free travel to one pastor/priest in every batch which will facilitate them to be guided, led in prayer/worship at each of the spots. Spiritual significance of the Pilgrimage will be explained in depth by the priest.
- i. Besides this, the Tour Operator shall send a representative of the company as a Tour Leader to verse all the arrangements, ensure safety and comfort of the Pilgrims. He will coordinate with all agencies, right from the time of starting till completion of the Tour.
- j. The Tour Operator will be provided the identification card issued by the MD, APSC(M)FC in respect of each Pilgrim selected for Pilgrimage.
- k. The Pilgrim selected by the Screening Committee will remit their portion in the form of DD in favour of Managing Director, APSCMFC, who in turn will deliver the DD's of the Pilgrims concerned under particular package to the tour operator before 30 days prior to departure. The Portion of Government share will be released to the Tour Operator after satisfactory completion of Tour.
- l. The Tour Operator should settle all the Bills of the Pilgrims and give them a memorable Pilgrimage which is "all inclusive" and ensure all formalities for entry and exists in different airports and Countries is fulfilled.

- m. On the day of the commencement of the Tour Operator must make a detailed presentation to the Pilgrims explaining all the precautions, do's and don'ts to be followed during the tour. A letter should be sent by the Tour Operator at least two weeks in advance about what to be carried and other precautions.

EMBARKATION POINTS

Embarkation Point Hyderabad and back to Hyderabad.

The prescribed application from "Pilgrims for Holy Land visit" is annexed to this order at Annexure-I and the places to be visited by the Pilgrims in Annexure – II.

10. The Managing Director, A.P. State Christian (Minorities) Finance Corporation, Hyderabad shall have power to incur all the expenditure relating to the selection of pilgrims and their tour from Hyderabad to the Holy Land and Back which includes the cost of advertisements, conduct of meetings, appointing temporary staff as needed arranging transport, refreshments, lunch as case may be, stationary and other incidental expenditure not exceeding 2% of the budget provided for the Pilgrimage.

:: 10 ::

Annexure – 1



ANDHRA PRADESH STATE CHRISTIAN (MINORITIES) FINANCE CORPORATION

**Minorities Welfare Department
Government of Andhra Pradesh**

(for Office Use Only)

Date of receipt of the application:

File No.:

Online Registration No.

**Finance Assistance of Subsidy to
Pilgrimage to Holy Land of Jerusalem**

(Subsidy not exceeding Rs.20,000/- (Rupees Twenty thousands only))

APPLICATION FORM

1. Name of the Applicant: _____
(Surname) (Middle Name) (Last Name)

a) Age :

b) Date of Birth :

2. Proof of Bonafide Christian

(Please tick)

a) Certificate issued by Mandal Revenue Officer ()

b) Baptism Certificate ()

3. Address for Correspondence:

H.No. : _____,
Street Name : _____, Mandal: _____,
City/District : _____, State : _____,
Pin Code : _____
E-Mail : Ph.No.: _____, Mobile: _____

1. Passport Details:

Name (As recorded in Passport) :
Passport Number :
Date of Issue :
Passport issued from :
(Name of the Passport Office)
Valid till date :
adhar Card No. :
Voter Id No. :

Contd... (11)..

2. Name of the Spouse : (if accompanying)
a) Age :
b) Possessing a passport : Yes / No
3. Whether Medical Certificate from a Govt. / Private Doctor certifying that the applicant is medically fit to undertake the tour is enclosed. (Yes/No)
4. Whether willing to take the tour as scheduled by the Department as per the slot, if not specify the reasons (Yes/No)
5. Whether willing to pay the Pilgrims share by means of DD along with required documents to the tour operator at least two months in advance or as and when called for by the tour operator. (Yes/No)

Place :

Signature of the applicant

Date :

Check List:

Attested Photocopies of Documents to be enclosed

1. Copy of passport. (Yes/No)
2. Community certificate (issued by MRO/Baptism certificate) (Yes/No)
3. Proof of Medical certificate (Yes/No)

Note:

1. It is mandatory for the applicant to fill all the columns. Incomplete application forms will be summarily rejected without any notice.
2. Application should accompany with all required documents.
3. The application form and all required documents should be properly indexed with page numbers and index should be placed on the top of the application form.
4. The tour will be aided by Govt. of A.P. to the extent of Rs. 20,000/- only per head and the balance to be borne by the applicant.
5. This scheme is meant for Christians only. (Community certificate issued by MRO or Baptism Certificate is a must, No other certificates will be accepted).
6. Sponsoring will be on first-come-first-served basis within the preferred category.
7. On filing application to web www.christianminorities.ap.gov.in, provisional registration No. will be allotted.
8. In case of spouse, please fill in a separate application form
9. The tour will start from Hyderabad and ends at Hyderabad. Pilgrims will have to make their own arrangements to reach Hyderabad. Place and date of assembly will be intimated in due course.
10. Validity of the passport should be for 2 years from the date of application.
11. If a person is found medically not fit he will not be allowed to undertake the tour.
12. The applicant after applying online a Hard-Copy along with the provisional registered No. along with all the relevant documents should be submitted to the following address "so as to reach within (05) days" after online date is closed;

**" THE MANAGING DIRECTOR,
A.P. STATE CHRISTIAN (MINORITIES) FINANCE
CORPORATION,
OPP. SHADAN COLLEGE, MUGHAL EMAMI
MANSION, FLAT NO. 102, KHAIRATABAD,
HYDERABAD – 500 004".**

If, Hard-copy is not received within stipulated time, provisional registration will be cancelled and no further correspondence will be entertained.

Annexure – II

Places to be covered under Pilgrimage to Holy Land of Israel

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Bethlehem | 21. Mt. of Temptation |
| 2. Mt. of Olives | 22. Dead Sea |
| 3. Sanctuaries of Pater
Noster Ascension | 23. Tiberius/Nazareth |
| 4. Chapel of Dorminous Flevit | 24. Caesarea |
| 5. Garden of Gethsemani | 25. Haifa |
| 6. Church of Agony and
St.Peter's in Galicantu | 26. Mt.Carmel |
| 7. Mt.Zion via Kirdon Valley | 27. Hanging Garden |
| 8. Room of the Last Supper and
Tomb of David | 28. Stella Maris Church |
| 9. Wailing Wall and Dome of | 29. Sea of Galilee |
| 10. Church of Nativity. | 30. Mt. of Beatitudes |
| 11. Old City of Jerusalem | 31. Tabgha |
| 12. Church of St.Anne | 32. Capernaum |
| 13. Pool of Bethesda | 33. Church of Annunciation |
| 14. Dolorosa | 34. Wedding Church |
| 15. Fece Homo Arch | 35. Yardenit |
| 16. Calvary, The Church of
Holy Tomb/Holy Sepulcher | 36. Baptismal Site |
| 17. Golgotha/Garden Tomb | 37. Jordan River |
| 18. Einkarem (Church of
Visitation and St. John's
Church) | 38. Mt. Tabor |
| 19. Bethany (Lazarus Tomb) | 39. Border Terminal |
| 20. Jericho | 40. Mt.Nebo |
| | 41. Mt.Sinai |

NOTE: Ordinarily, the tour period is for a week (Israel Government issues visas only for 7 days). It is proposed to evaluate the standard tour packages being offered by tour operators now namely Israel – Egypt – Jordan tour package and adopt the most economical package. The number of places to be covered in seven days tour package shall be decided by the screening committee and accordingly tender notification shall be issued by the Managing Director, A.P. State Christian (Minorities) Finance Corporation Limited, Hyderabad.

3. The Managing Director, A.P. State Christian (Minorities) Finance Corporation, Hyderabad shall take further necessary action in the matter accordingly.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

AHMAD NADEEM
SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
The Managing Director, A.P. State Christian
(Minorities) Finance Corporation, Hyderabad.
All the District Collectors.

(PTO)

:: 14 ::

Copy to:

The P.S. to Chairman, A.P. State Minorities Commission, Hyderabad

The Finance (Expr. Sw) Department.

The P.S. to Spl. Secretary to C.M.

The P.S. to Chief Secretary.

The P.S. to M(MW).

The P.S. to Secretary to Govt., M.W.D.

sc/sf.

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //

SECTION OFFICER